



STATE OF CONNECTICUT NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal
Department of Consumer Protection
Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez

TUESDAY JANUARY 6, 2004

ATTORNEY GENERAL, DCP COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCE SETTLEMENT WITH HOLY TRINITY

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez today announced that they have reached a settlement with Holy Trinity Community Centers LLC and CMRK Inc. requiring a payment of \$140,100.

"The severity of self-dealing and self-enrichment here is appalling," Blumenthal said. "Holy Trinity's operators engaged in a blatant and shameful scheme that lined their pockets while cynically exploiting the public's generosity. I will act forcefully to prevent sham charities from misusing contributors' hard-earned, well-intentioned gifts to help the needy. A cynical few should not undermine the support and credibility of so many charities that do such good and meaningful work in our communities."

"It's despicable how the people's goodwill was taken advantage of by this organization using the name Holy Trinity in seeking donations," Rodriguez said. "There was absolutely nothing religious about them. The Connecticut Unfair Trade Practice Act prohibits these types of deception. I hope this settlement agreement brings some form of consolation to those who donated with the intent of helping charitable causes."

Blumenthal sued Holy Trinity last year for violations of Connecticut's charitable solicitation and unfair trade practices laws. The organization operated clothing drop boxes labeled to suggest that proceeds would go to charities for breast cancer or other causes.

The Attorney General's Office uncovered evidence that CMRK paid former Holy Trinity Executive Director Michael T. Mooney kickbacks and that Holy Trinity's officers allowed Mooney to use the group's assets to help pay debts related to construction of his home.

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Approximately \$120,000 will be deposited in three equal payments into a state account. Blumenthal and Rodriguez will distribute the funds to charities for breast cancer victims, breast cancer research and anti-drunk driving efforts, which would have been the potential recipients of properly allocated proceeds.

The remaining \$20,000 will be used to address the outstanding debts of Holy Trinity, which has gone out of business. In addition, former Holy Trinity Executive Director Alfred G. Kupchunos has agreed to a \$5,000 civil penalty and a five-year ban on charitable solicitation.

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